

EDUCATION

M.A., Experimental Psychology

Expected: May 2025

University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC

GPA: 3.9/4.00

Thesis: *“Exploring Profane and Aggressive Language in Humor with HEXACO and Dark Tetrad Personality Using Random Forests”*

Advisor: Dr. Paul. J. Silvia

B. Psychological Sciences with Honours

2018 - 2021

Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

GPA: 3.39/4.00 (“Upper-Second Class Honours”)

Thesis: *“Social Support in the Digital Age: The Relationship Between Online Perceived Social Support, Well-Being, And Loneliness”*

Advisor: Dr. Ben Williams

PUBLICATIONS AND POSTERS

Burnett, M. I., & Silvia, P. J. (2024). *Funny Stuff: Predicting profanity use in creative humor production.* In progress.

Zell, E. & **Burnett, M. I. (2024).** *Transgender Knowledge Mediates U.S. Political Differences in Prejudice and Support for Trans-Inclusive Policies.* Under review at Sex Roles.

Burnett, M. I., & Silvia, P. J. (2024, March 15-16). *Some Funny #%%@!/: Predicting profanity use in creative humor production tasks* [conference presentation]. APA Division 10 Conference, Denton, Texas

Burnett, M. I., & Zell, E. (2023, November 4). *Ideology, Ignorance of History, and Perception of Racism* [poster presentation]. Society for Southeastern Social Psychologists (SSSP) Conference, Charlotte, North Carolina

RESEARCH

Lead researcher/first-author projects:

Tracking The Relationship Between Polling Swings and Left and Right-Wing Partisan’s Attitudes Toward Democracy

Aug 2024 - Present

UNC Greensboro; co-author: Dr. Aaron Beveridge

A study aiming to explore how partisan’s attitudes toward the legitimacy of democracy varies as a function of the likelihood that their preferred candidate will win the US election. In progress.

Data collection: Web-scraped text data from social media sites.

Data processing: Cleaned and formatted text data, trained word embeddings model on a large corpus, computed a la carte embeddings.

Analyses: Conducted change-point analyses, calculated cosine distance between embeddings.

Exploring Profane and Aggressive Language in Humor with HEXACO and Dark Tetrad Personality Using Random Forests

Jan 2024 - Present

UNC Greensboro; advisor: Dr. Paul J. Silvia

A thesis aiming to identify personality factors within the HEXACO and Dark Tetrad models that predict the use of hostility and aggression in jokes. In progress.

Data preprocessing: Cleaned data, coded text responses for aggressive targeting subjects using a syntax parser and sentiment dictionary.

Analyses: Conducted 12 random forests (all combinations of 3 predictor sets and 4 outcomes), each with accompanying model fit estimates and variable importance and accumulated local effects analyses.

Write up: Wrote ~15000-word proposal, successfully proposed in September 2024 and to be defended by March 2025.

Funny Stuff: Predicting Profanity Use in Creative Humor Production

Dec 2023 – Sep 2024

UNC Greensboro; co-author: Dr. Paul J. Silvia

A set of two studies ($n \sim 1600$) on the relationship between Five-Factor personality and use of profane language in jokes. Completed.

Data preprocessing: Removed long-string responses and attention-check fails, computed scales and checked internal reliability, cleaned text data, coded text responses for profanity using dictionary-based text analysis methods.

Analyses: Conducted a structural equation model (study 1) and a classification random forest and regression random forest (study 2), computed variable importance, accumulated local effects, model fit.

Write up: Wrote ~7000-word paper, about to be submitted for publication at Psychology of Creativity and the Arts (PACA).

Social Support in the Digital Age: The Relationship Between Online Perceived Social Support, Well-Being, And Loneliness

Feb 2021 – Dec 2021

Swinburne University of Technology; advisor: Dr. Ben Williams

An honors thesis aiming to develop and validate a novel scale to measure online social support, and determine whether online social support is associated with the same beneficial effects on well-being as in-person social support. Completed.

Conceptualization/systematic literature review: Conducted a systematic search of psychological research journals.

Analyses: Conducted an exploratory factor analysis and several mediated regressions.

Write up: Wrote ~8000-word thesis, which was awarded upper-second class honors.

Collaborations:

Automatic Scoring of Humor with Large Language Models

March 2023 - Present

Pennsylvania State University and UNC Greensboro; lead investigators: Roger E. Beaty, Paul J. Silvia

A study aiming to determine the effectiveness and reliability of large language models in rating jokes for humor ability. In progress.

Data analysis: Assisted in training and tuning a large language model to rate creative humor production (original jokes) for funniness.

Data coding: Directed the collection of human raters, assisted in conducting a Rasch model to compute humor ability scores based on human ratings.

Transgender Knowledge Mediates U.S. Political Differences in Prejudice and Support for Trans-Inclusive Policies

May 2023 – Dec 2023

UNC Greensboro; co-author: Dr. Ethan Zell

A study on the relationship between political affiliation, knowledge related to transgender health, and support for trans-inclusive policies. Completed.

Literature review and planning: Reviewed literature on predictors of attitudes toward transgender people and opinions on trans-inclusive policies, designed study, obtained IRB approval, entered survey into Qualtrics.

Write up: Wrote the original draft of the full paper, and several subsequent revisions. This paper is currently under review at Sex Roles.

TEACHING

Course Instructor
UNC Greensboro

August 2024 - Present

PSY311L: Research Methods. Fall 2024. Class of 25 students.

Designing and delivering bi-weekly lectures

Managing assessments and grading

Holding weekly office hours

Teaching Assistant
UNC Greensboro

August 2023 – June 2024

PSY122: Careers in Psychology. Spring 2024.

PSY455: Social and Personality Development. Spring 2024.

PSY250: Developmental Psychology. Spring 2023.

PSY456: Cognitive Development. Fall 2023.

PSY341: Adult Psychopathology. Fall 2023.

PSY455: Social and Personality Development. Fall 2023.

Attending classes and directing activities, grading assignments and exams, corresponding with students via email, holding office hours, printing and distributing study materials, tracking student participation and engagement.

NOTEWORTHY COURSEWORK

IAL620 - Text Analysis and Natural Language Processing, in progress

STA622 – Complex Data Analysis, in progress

ERM785 – R for Education and Social Sciences, in progress

PSY609 – Statistical Methods in Psychology I

PSY610 – Statistical Methods in Psychology II

PSY401 – Advanced Quantitative Methods,

SKILLS

Programming languages

R (intermediate – advanced). Particularly familiar with the following packages in R: quanteda, reticulate, caret, ggplot2, text, rparty, NetworkToolbox, conText. **Python** (beginner), **SQL** (beginner)

Software

SQL workbench (beginner), **MPlus** (beginner), **SPSS** (advanced but out of practice)

HONORS AND AWARDS

Summer Research Award. \$2000.

Judge's Choice Award for Best Speech, APA Division 10 Student Showcase. \$200 cash prize.

June 2024

March 2024

UNC Greensboro Travel award. \$500.
UNC Greensboro Travel award. \$500.

April 2024
Nov 2023

MEMBERSHIPS AND CERTIFICATES

Member - Society for Personality and Social Psychology	2023 - Present
Member - American Psychological Association: Division 10, Aesthetics and Creativity	2024 - Present
Associate - Australian Society of Rehabilitation Counsellors (member no. 13002)	2022 – 2023

Tri-citizen of Ireland, Australia, and the United Kingdom

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Director of Research (Researcher until Dec 2022) March 2022 – July 2023

Unconventional Organisation

Managed online magazine on ADHD, publishing one article per fortnight on topics such as recent research findings, tips on concentration and goal setting, and product recommendations

Delivered a weekly written report on recent publications related to the treatment of ADHD (summarized 4 research papers per week, for all weeks Dec 2022 – July 2023)

Attended weekly director meetings

Rehabilitation Counsellor

Jan 2022 – July 2022

Pinnacle Rehab

Developed rehabilitation plans for individuals (clients) with psychological workplace injuries

Worked with clients, healthcare professionals, insurance companies, and employers to evaluate relevant physical, psychological, and social factors associated with injury and rehabilitation

Facilitated return to employment for clients

REFERENCES

Dr. Paul J. Silvia, Professor of Psychology at UNC Greensboro.

p_silvia@uncg.edu

Dr. Ben Williams, Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Swinburne University of Technology.

bwilliams@swin.edu.au